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by governor.state.ms.us; Sun, 01 Sep 2002 13:18:44 -0500  
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for <governor@governor.state.ms.us>; Sun, 1 Sep 2002 13:17:53 -0500 (CDT)  
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by mx1.its.state.ms.us (8.10.0/8.10.0) with ESMTP id g81IC8801801  
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Sun, 1 Sep 2002 14:16:49 -0400

Message-ID: <02ad01c251e3\$c3574e20\$0e01a8c0@ofial>

From: "LEONARDO LIMONTA" <cubaofia@prodigy.net>

To: <Undisclosed-Recipient:@pimout4-ext.prodigy.net;>

Subject: Speech given by President of the Republic of Cuba on August 30, 2002

Date: Sun, 1 Sep 2002 13:41:22 -0400

MIME-Version: 1.0

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X-MSMail-Priority: Normal

X-Mailer: Microsoft Outlook Express 6.00.2600.0000

X-MimeOLE: Produced By Microsoft MimeOLE V6.00.2600.0000

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

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Speech given by Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, =  
at the ceremony to celebrate the completion of the repair, expansion and =  
building of 779 primary and secondary schools in the capital. Guanabo, =  
Habana del Este, August 30, 2002

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Dear construction workers;

Dear teachers and students:

Fellow residents of Havana and Cuba:

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Today, as in the glorious days of the Bay of Pigs when our brave =  
soldiers took less than 72 hours to wipe out the mercenary troops who =  
had invaded our country to destroy the Revolution, our construction =  
workers, supported by the people living in the capital, have achieved a =  
great victory.

A program was planned and implemented over a 20-month =  
period; it was to cover 779 primary and junior high schools in our =  
capital city,

where a profound and unprecedented type of educational revolution that =  
will serve as an example to the world was initiated. Of this figure, =  
which includes all the schools at those educational levels, 734 were to =  
be completely renovated and expanded, 12 were to be rebuilt, and 33 =  
would be newly built. The number of classrooms needed for the program =  
amounted to 3,287, including the rooms needed for computer labs.

On April 27, 2001, the first 100 renovated schools were =  
inaugurated; by October 26, 2001, 202 had been renovated; on April 10, =

2002, renovation number 302 was inaugurated; and on June 29 renovation = number 402 was inaugurated. On that day, there were still 377 schools = needing to be renovated, rebuilt or built.

The program had to be completed by September 1, 2002. We had only 62 = days available in which to finish the program of the 779 on time and = with all the requisite quality. The 779 included 33 new schools, some of = which had not even been started.

Why such an urgent effort? It was not just a whim or a desire to break = records. It was simply that, as is traditional, classes would begin in = the first few days of September. An enormous effort to train thousands = of urgently needed teachers in intensive courses had been made and the = aims of their training had been fully met. All the classrooms already = had their televisions and all the schools had their computer labs. The = 1,200 urgently needed teachers who had been trained in intensive courses = to teach computer skills were ready. Actually, the fact of having 20 = months for the program of renovating and building thousands of = classrooms and other buildings seemed to be a perfectly adequate amount = of time to complete our task without any great pressure.

As it happens as often as not, some of the cadres = responsible for the job were overconfident. The actual fact is that, as = the school year was about to begin, it could be seen that the program = was behind schedule; calculations of the time and effort necessary were = overoptimistic. Moreover, although it was possible to work day and night = during the summer, because that was school vacation time, the excessive = heat and the rains could present not insignificant obstacles.

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We became aware of the need for a titanic effort as = renovation job number 402 was inaugurated =BEexcellent work on an = important and beautiful school in La Lisa=BE with work still to be done = on 377 schools and only nine weeks to do it. All the materials were = available. We had to complete the program on schedule, do it under the = strictest quality control, and without using work forces from projects = given priority because of their economic importance or the value of the = services they were called on to provide.

The extraordinary organizational capacity of our Party and = Young Communist League, of the people of the Havana and of its = grass-roots organizations was put to the test. We had the enthusiastic = support of ministries and many agencies and companies which, from the = outset, had shown great enthusiasm in supporting a plan which would = benefit all of the city=92s children.

The constituencies, People=92s Councils, and People=92s Power Assemblies = in each municipality devoted all the time and support needed to the = program. The contribution of teaching staff, school principals and = municipal education directors was particularly outstanding. The = children=92s involvement was very moving; they inspired joy, passion and = courage in everyone, doing the tasks within their capabilities any time = of day and sometimes in the early hours of the morning. Parents and = their children were also there at night or in the early hours of the = morning.

On more than one occasion the number of construction = workers, both professionals and volunteers, who worked in one day = totaled almost 40,000 people. Several provinces sent reinforcement = construction workers, people chosen for their good morale and abilities. = No one ever lost his or her confidence or certainty that we would = succeed.

At 9:00 p.m. today we begin this ceremony, only three hours = away from the deadline to complete the building program. Earlier today, =

at around midday and at 2:15 p.m., work on the last two schools was = completed. A sport=92s reporter would say that the Olympic race between = the time available and the building program for the 779 schools was won = by the latter in a photo finish.

Hundreds of thousands of people took part in one way or another in this = shared project. Many working days stretched to 16 and 20 hours. Those = involved in our endeavors in July and August were as well looked after = as our resources allowed. Counting breakfasts, lunches, dinners and = snacks, 30 million meals were supplied.=20

The total costs of the two-year school building program = reached 25,851,000 in U.S. dollars and 215, 827,000 Cuban pesos. The = value of the buildings, restored, expanded or newly built can be = calculated at no less than two billion dollars. Their social and human = value cannot be calculated. The 20 students per classroom at the primary = level puts our country way ahead of all other countries in the world at = this educational level.

And while this was going on in the capital, other titanic = efforts by construction workers and the people were continuing in the = battle to totally repair the damage and destruction caused by Hurricane = Michelle and to meet the deadline and do so with quality. The cost of = this was much higher but equally essential.

In our city, as happens in any large undertaking, there were = contradictions, deficiencies, arguments, strong criticisms, reprimands = and discussions. There is no doubt that this contributed to some = rectifications, reorganization, strategies and tactics developed along = the way, ingenious solutions to various unforeseen problems and = situations where our engineers, architects, building technicians and = chief project designers showed their talent.

Much will be written and thousands of anecdotes will be told = about this noble and selfless epic which will bestow such great benefits = on our homeland. The experience gained will be of great use in other = plans and projects. The Revolution=92s ambitious educational program = will continue to expand throughout the whole country.

As I bring my words to a close today, it only remains for me = to say that the battle was won with great dignity and courage. We can = feel proud of the feats we have accomplished.

However, a basic principle must be laid down. Today, everything is very = beautiful in the educational institutions, which look like new. As is = normal in any construction works, problems will doubtless arise in some = of those recently built, rebuilt or renovated. There will have to be a = labor force ready to find urgent solutions to those that arise at = whatever point. And the most important thing: the relevant mechanisms = must be organized in the Capital, at the municipal and people=92s = council level, in order to immediately carry out repairs in any school = that needs it. Appropriate, accurate, certain and completely rational = and economical calculations must be made, with care to put aside and = protect the materials needed, so that the 779 schools in the building = program just completed are always kept in the top-notch, heartening and = beautiful state they are in as we declare them open today.=20

A veritable culture of protecting and preserving the = schools, their resources and equipment must be encouraged in the = children, the teachers, parents, local residents and our people in = general. Nothing more noble, human, motivating and useful than a school = can be created.

We must ensure that what fills us all with joy today will = never become, through laziness or irresponsibility, a source of sorrow = and frustration.

Let us safeguard what has been achieved. Let us be worthy of the feats =  
we have shown we can accomplish!

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Long live the revolution!

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Long live socialism!

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Patria o muerte!

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Venceremos!

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Information Office  
Cuban Interests Section

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